

Mr. Lloyd Shearer  
Editor at Large  
Parade Magazine  
733 Third Avenue  
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Shearer:

In your issue of January 9th, one of Walter Scott's Personality Parade responses stated that CIA 'uses political assassination as a weapon' and that Operation Phoenix "run by the CIA established a new high for U. S. political assassinations in Vietnam." Since I have held responsible positions in CIA for many years and was also (during detached service from CIA) responsible for U. S. support to Operation Phoenix, I believe I am uniquely qualified to testify (as I have in public session under oath to Senate and House Committees) that:

a. CIA does not and has not used political assassination as a weapon.

b. Operation Phoenix was run not by the CIA but by the Government of Vietnam, with the support of the CORDS element of the U. S. Military Assistance Command in coordination with several U. S. agencies including CIA.

c. Operation Phoenix is not and was not a program of assassination. It countered the Viet Cong apparatus attempting to overthrow the Government of Vietnam by targetting its leaders. Wherever possible, these were apprehended or invited to defect, but a substantial number were killed in firefights during military operations or resisting capture. There is a vast difference in kind, not merely in degree, between these combat casualties (even including the few abuses which occurred) and the victims of the Viet Cong's systematic campaign of terrorism to which Mr. Scott quite accurately referred.

In order to clarify this important question to the millions of concerned Americans who read Parade, I should appreciate your publishing this letter.

Sincerely,

/s/ W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby

WEC:blp

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## WALTER SCOTT'S Personality Parade

*Q. Is there any agency of the U.S. Government which has been authorized to include political assassination in its practices?—M. Wilson, Austin, Tex.*

*A. The one U.S. agency which uses political assassination as a weapon is the Central Intelligence Agency. Many of its men in Vietnam have assassinated civilian Communists in an effort to destroy the Vietcong infrastructure. Operation Phoenix run by the CIA established a new high for U.S. political assassinations in Vietnam, largely in response to enemy terrorist tactics which also include assassination, kidnapping, terrorism of all sorts.*